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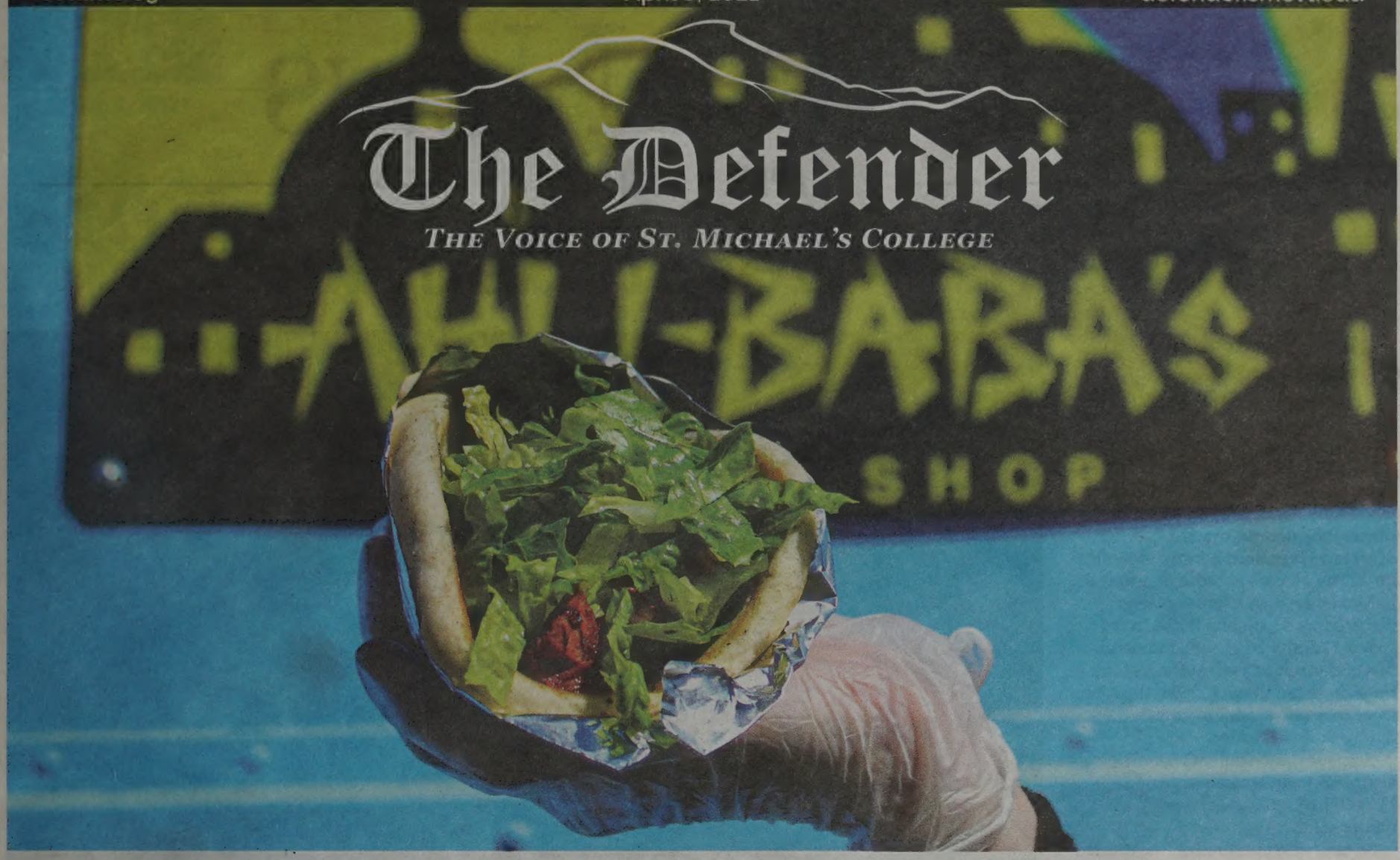

PHOTO BY LUCAS PERSECHINO

Spring fever

The Student Government Association hosted the Spring Fair this Saturday. As food trucks were spread throughout the main lawn, students took advantage of the Spring weather to enjoy free food, quality time with friends, and relish in the moment. A disc golf course and volleyball nets supplemented the fair.

Pictured above is a chicken pita from Ahli-Baba's food truck. It was stationed on the lawn facing the Chapel. The Wheel House catered and offered meatball subs, hot dogs, and popcorn. For students who are vegan and gluten-free, Tiny Thai provided a variety of foods specifically for their dietary restrictions.

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Student tensions with Public Safety

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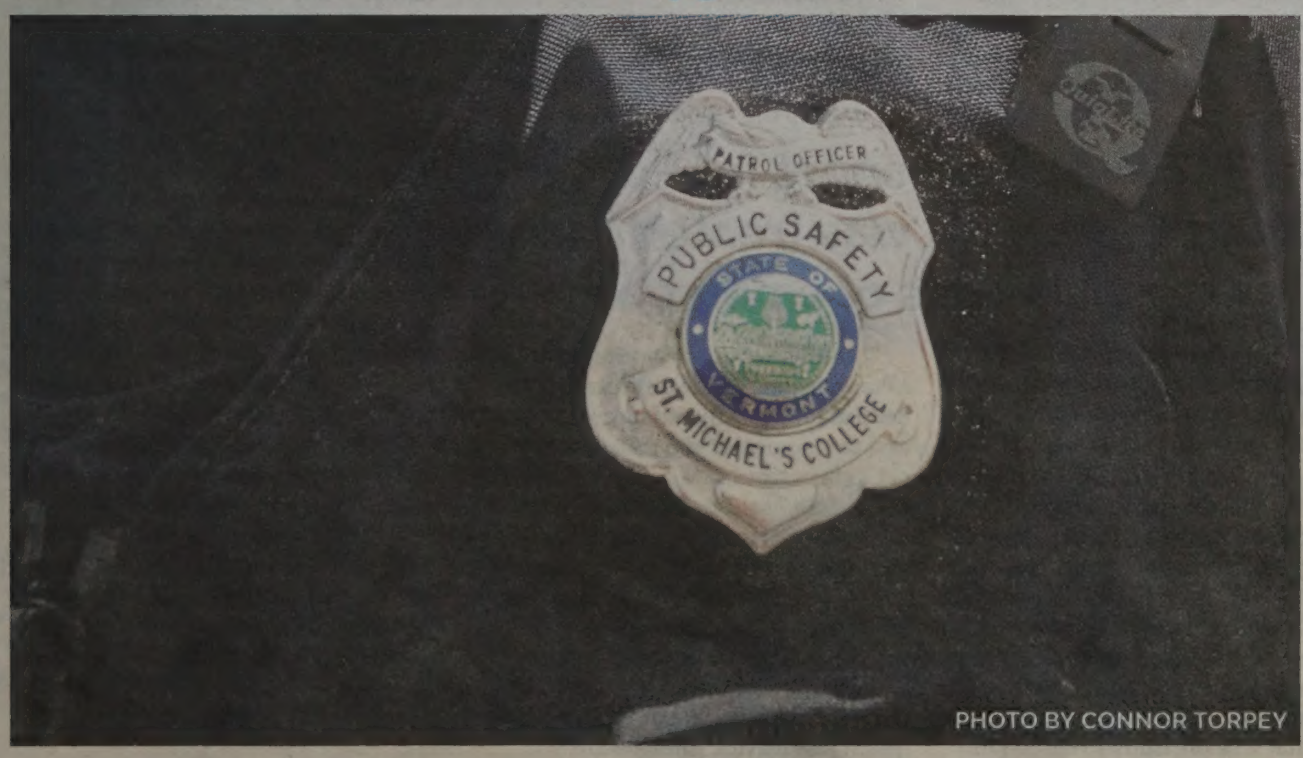

PHOTO BY CONNOR TORPEY

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DEFENDER NEWS

APRIL 8 2021

Tensions rise over student fines

By Ashley DeLeon
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PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY LUCAS PERSECHINO

Logan Hailey '23, his roommate, and a friend were smoking marijuana in an Alumni Hall dorm when they heard a loud knock. They opened the door to two public safety officers who noticed a towel under the door. The officers asked if non-household members were present, and if there was marijuana in the living space. Hailey said yes. He handed a bag of marijuana to the officers, and they made him flush it down the toilet. After they left, Hailey slammed the door out of frustration.

Someone knocked on Hailey's door again. The officers had returned. "That'll be $500 for disrespect," an officer said.

In total, the cumulative fines added up to over $800.

"We do have the authority to issue a ticket for disrespectful behavior, and that is left broad by the College intentionally," said Doug Babcock, director of Public Safety.

Hailey's case is one of several, as fines are becoming an increasingly large issue for students living on campus at St. Michael's College. Babcock declined to comment on the cumulative number of fines students received this year, but noted a high prevalence of COVID violations. Each COVID violation warrants a $250 fine and probationary status.

"I feel comfortable saying, you know, there's 30 to 40 COVID violations a week. And we've had between 10 and 15 students a week miss testing," said Jeff Vincent, director of Residence Life and Community Standards. Vincent explained that within 30 to 40 violations, one violation can include ten people, for example, leading to an overwhelming number of sanctions. Household violations and off-campus guests on campus are the most common violations this year.

"The number is high. Too high," he said.

Students claim, however, that they are fined for offenses they believe are unwarranted, and have led people to speculate why Public Safety is cracking down. Public Safety is rumored to receive financial benefits from fines. According to Babcock, this information is false.

"No fines whatsoever come back to the department in any form of revenue or budget," he said.

Though an interaction may involve a Public Safety officer, or a report leads to a fine, Babcock explained that it is not always accurate to assume that Public Safety is issuing the fine. The director of Public Safety also denied rumors of a quota system put in place to make up for a budget deficit. "None of that is true. That has nothing to do with the way we do business," he stated.

What students don't understand, according to Babcock, is that most types of violations that lead to fines are levied by the Office of Student Conduct. "Public Safety has a very small number of things that we can write for citations and that we issue fines on," he said.

At heart, each fine issued is an invitation for conversation, Babcock explained. "When we're dealing with folks out in whatever space they're in and whatever the reason we were called, it's often not when everybody's having their best day for one reason or another," he said. Babcock uses this as an opportunity to educate people, and in some instances, the fine is waived.

> "I've always had respect for Public Safety, but the way I was treated made me feel like less of a person"

"I've always had respect for Public Safety, but the way I was treated made me feel like less of a person," Hailey said.

The public safety officers coerced Hailey to open drawers and search his room for additional marijuana after he verbally expressed that none was left, he said. After they watched him search the room and claimed there was marijuana hidden, the officers realized that Hailey was telling the truth. He was then led to the bathroom and asked to flush what was previously handed to the officers.

"I'm not even mad that they got us for doing something we really weren't supposed to do, like smoking weed. You know, it's off the rules. I was more mad about how they treated us," Hailey explained.

The interaction with Public Safety had a particular impact on Hailey's roommate. "For most of the week [when the incident occurred], I felt really on edge and had bad anxiety. I had nightmares for days," said Julian Harris '23.

Tensions between students and Public Safety officers has been a contentious topic of conversation on campus, with some claiming that Public Safety is on a "power trip."

People have also expressed concerns with the intentions of officers, and if their intent is deeper than wanting to keep the community safe.

"I think the incentive changed. Like last semester went from trying to keep students safe and helping them, and this semester was like trying to get kids in trouble, get part of that 250 dollar fine," said Kenny Cesar '22.

Cesar explained an encounter he had with Public Safety, where he was caught in a residence hall other than his own.

"A Public Safety officer that's been here for like a couple of years was like, 'yeah, just leave... I don't want you here. You shouldn't be here,'" Cesar said.

For Julia Fitzgerald '22, the switch in the behavior of officers, compared to her freshman year, is clear, she said. "[In the past], I remember them wanting to just make sure we're OK, make sure everything was safe. And now it feels like they just have a bit of a power trip issue going on," Fitzgerald explained. Within the past few years, she noticed many new, younger officers on campus. "I think that has really affected the way they treat us," she said.

"Whether or not conflicts between Public Safety officers and students are on the rise or of a different tone or nature, I don't have statistics to verify," Babcock said.

Regardless of the conflicts between officers and students, however, Babcock attributes the perceptions of hostility to the lack of bonding activities between officers and students due to COVID-19.

"We have not been able to conduct our usual outreach activities such as the campus safety field day, pizza social, Fresh Check day and more. When we are able to hold those events again, I believe we will see a positive shift in relations," Babcock said.

In the meantime, Babcock wants everyone to remember that COVID-19 has created a very stressful environment that has changed our daily lives, disrupted our rhythm, and heightened overall stress and anxiety.

"We must all work to get through this together," he said.

Students demand change

By Ashley DeLeon
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An anonymous Instagram account, @studentstrikesmcvt, emerged on March 29 in an effort to gauge student dissatisfaction with administrative decisions behind COVID-19, and student tensions against Public Safety.

Last Friday, the account announced a socially distanced protest planned for tomorrow at the 300s field, but canceled unexpectedly on Monday. The protest was created to strike against the administration's alleged lack of mental health outreach to students, according to the account admin, who requested to be anonymous. They did not comment on why the protest was canceled.

The social media page is composed of student letters written anonymously to the administration, which are later submitted to the Instagram page. The letters address a variety of issues, from calls to reform Public Safety to demands for added break days to the academic calendar.

In a letter posted on March 29, a student anonymously demanded more break days and threatened to dissuade future students from enrolling at the College if not done:

"On behalf of the student body, if things do not change, I would like the administration to note that we do have the power to dissuade high school juniors and seniors from applying or attending St. Michael's College. Given the financial situation of the school...I sincerely hope that we will not have to come to such drastic measures for needed changes to be implemented..."

The letter received social media traction since it was first posted, accruing over 300 likes in less than two days. The following day, the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs announced an additional break day on Wednesday, April 14, to follow the scheduled break day next Tuesday. The campus-wide email from VPAA Jeffery Trumbower explained that President Sterritt and her Cabinet discussed the idea of adding a fourth break day this semester, after consideration for student opinion.

"In light of the stress brought about by the pandemic, we decided that an additional break day is needed. We are, therefore, designating Wednesday, April 14th as a break day for undergraduate classes," according to the email.

"as time passed without action... I wanted to do something... to provide a platform for the movement..."
-ACCOUNT ADMIN
@student strikesmcvt
1 new post
ILLUSTRATION BY ASHLEY DELEON

The creation of the account stems from the individual stories people openly shared about their experience at the College this year, the account admin explained. "I was truly taken aback hearing some of the stories of my peers, and as time passed without action on behalf of administration, I wanted to do something," they said. This page is meant to provide a platform "to the movement I was witnessing among students on campus," they explained.

All materials published, aside from the "Student Strike Interest Survey," are received directly from peers at the College. The account admin only posts captions, and replies to messages, comments, and posts content to the page, they said. Student submissions were further described as the "essence of this account."

Students plead for Public Safety reform

Another anonymous letter posted on March 31 specifically demands changes within Public Safety, claiming that on many occasions, officers have disrespected students.

"Disrespect is a completely subjective thing. Just about anything can be considered disrespect, meaning that officers can give out hefty fines like this for essentially anything. This is also a breach of students' First Amendment right to freedom of speech. There is also no way to anonymously report an officer for misconduct, while it is incredibly easy to report students...," the anonymous student wrote. They disclosed that this letter was sent through direct email to the College administration, and was later submitted to the student strike page.

Doug Babcock urged students to report concerns with officers, as every report is taken seriously, he stated. "When a report is made, myself or the sergeant review the complaint and the incident. We have body worn cameras and a policy that requires their use, which we often use as part of the review," Babcock explained. He emphasized that there are a variety of channels to report officers. "They can be reported through Residence Life, LiveSafe, Silent Witness (on the public safety website), switchboard, email, and many more," he said.

According to Babcock, if a report is made anonymously, it is often more challenging to address than when a student is willing to discuss the issue with Public Safety. "We also find at times that the complaint made, or the public story regarding a situation, is not wholly accurate to the way things went, but we are not able to change the public perception because of privacy issues," he said.

As for the subjectivity of fines, Babcock explained that officer training includes thresholds for fining based on specific offenses. A $500 fine is issued for conduct considered to be "egregious."

Separate petition calls for household changes

Annie Serkes '23 began an online petition petition on March 16 to allow for multi-household gatherings. This came as a result of updated state guidelines. This was not associated with the anonymous Instagram account.

According to the Vermont Department of Health (VDH), unvaccinated people can gather with fully vaccinated people or households without wearing a mask or remaining six-feet apart. If the other household is unvaccinated, people can gather with only one unvaccinated household or person. Masks and social distancing are required.

"I made the petition because we were told, upon coming back, that we would have all these regulations put into place and it would hopefully get better as the cases remain low and regulations would kind of open up as the semester went on. It's been like what, eight or nine weeks," she said.

This has caused much uproar on campus, which has led students to speculate that the College is purposely keeping the community in the Orange level all semester, in order to fine people for COVID violations and gain financial revenue.

At the March 25 Town Hall meeting, Dawn Ellinwood, vice president for student affairs, stated that restrictive household guidelines remain in place due to high numbers of COVID violations, the high risk of spread, and the number of cases in the greater Burlington area. Though the College administration acknowledges changes to the VDH's guidelines on households, the prevalence of COVID violations and decisions to keep the campus community safe have influenced the administration to not ease household restrictions.

One week after the Town Hall, the College loosened restrictions on outdoor gatherings. According to an email from the Office of Student Life, "Effective immediately, students may gather with non-household members in groups of up to 10 people." Students who choose to gather must be outdoors, socially distant and masked.

Though students acknowledge the efforts of administration, they believe that changes like these are not enough.

"Even though we know you're listening, nothing seems to actually change," a student wrote.

PHOTO BY COLIN MACMILLAN

UVM student shows a digital copy of a citation.

Spike in UVM suspensions leads to student action

By Faith Morgan
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With a rise in cases and the presence of the UK variant of COVID-19 on campus, University of Vermont officials knew they had to do something to stop the spread. Students received communication from Gary Derr, vice president for Operations and Public Safety, on Feb. 25, about adjustments to COVID related sanctions.

This communication to the student body read, "Effective immediately, all violations of the Green and Gold Promise, except for a first missed test, will be reviewed for suspension by the Center for Student Conduct in accordance with University policy."

Enrique Corredera, chief spokesman for UVM, stated in an email, "Some of these measures, like enhanced presence of professional staff in the Residence Halls, as well as greater willingness on the part of students to hold peers accountable, resulted in an increase in reports being made to the Center for Student Conduct."

This new policy caused an uproar among UVM students. A petition started by Michael Rogan, a UVM student, currently has over 3,800 signatures. In the petition, Rogan listed multiple incidents that have allegedly led to suspension of students:

"A student using the restroom at 3am without a mask, a student studying in a secluded campus study-room, with the door closed, alone, and without a mask, a student poking his head outside his door without a mask when he received an unexpected knock," had each led to suspensions according to the petition.

Along with signatures, some left reasons for signing the petition. "I'm signing because I was suspended on the grounds of a false claim and inadequate evidence," one student wrote. "I attend UVM. I'm extremely lonely and anxious," another wrote.

One reason for signing even came from a parent."I am signing because my daughter calls home crying with loneliness" they said.

Gwen Coger '23 said, "You can't be in another person's room or house or even car. It's all just so weird, everything feels so weird."

In an email, Corredera wrote that sanctions that followed the Feb. 25 communication were often too harsh. He stated that the switch to online learning or suspension was not always the sanction needed for the situation.

"Consistent with the Feb. 25 memo, the Center for Student Conduct appropriately considered whether the behavior necessitated removal from campus, either via suspension or a shift to remote learning. This level of sanctioning was not automatic, and in the vast majority of cases was not necessary," Corredera wrote.

Following this outcry by UVM students, the possible sanctions or COVID violations have been updated. On the UVM website, first offenses of egregious behavior call for a $250 fine and probation. Second offenses for egregious behavior call for suspension or remote continuation. Non-egregious behaviors (such as not wearing a mask or failure to social distance) call for an educational sanction on the first offense, with a fine and probation on the second offense and suspension on the third offense.

"Moving forward, to increase understanding of the adjudication process and better define 'increased accountability,' the Center for Student Conduct has articulated the sanctioning framework to be applied on their website. Removal from campus remains a viable sanction when the circumstances warrant," Corredera wrote.

While St. Michael's College has not seen a spike in cases like UVM did this semester, sanctions for COVID violations are given frequently. Many students continue to have questions about these policies. Jeff Vincent, assistant dean of students at St. Michael's said that the amount of COVID violations has been a steady number [no spike] from the first week that students have been back on campus.

"We've had, if you add in testing violations, we've had about 10-15 students a week not show up for testing. We've had another 30-40 household related violations every week, give or take, so it's a significant number, it's far too high," Vincent said.

An anonymous St. Michael's student, who was recently kicked off campus for COVID violations, said, "I have to switch to fully remote learning. Three out of four of my classes are in person and my teachers don't know how to accommodate and switch me over to be a virtual learner." Before appealing to be a commuter, this student claims they were told to withdraw from their in-person courses.

"I think the first offense, $250 fine and probation, is a reasonable punishment. I think it's effective, it's been scaring people from what I know. Like if you're on probation, no one really wants to do anything," said an anonymous St. Mike's student.

On March 30, communication from Jeffrey Trumbower, vice president of Academic Affairs at St. Michael's College, sent an email to the student body that read, "In light of the stress brought about by the pandemic, we decided that an additional break day is needed. We are, therefore, designating Wednesday, April 14 as a break day for undergraduate classes."

Due to recent student outcry at not only St. Michael's College, but also UVM, administration has taken action to ease stress within the community. College campuses across the country remain on edge as students and faculty find a balance between keeping the campus safe with low cases and maintaining the feeling of community on campus. UVM and St. Michael's have both endured this tough balance recently in enforcing COVID regulations, trying to determine what are fair sanctions, while still leaving wiggle room for social interaction.

SGA participation at record low

Association fails to meet quorum last week

By Bobby Grady
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PHOTO BY ONI FINSTERER '22 COURTESY OF SGA

The SGA Senate meets over Zoom on March 23 to discuss impeachments, suspensions and terminations.

A list of demands for racial justice were presented at the Student Government Association (SGA) Senate meeting on March 23. Due to low Senate attendance, the SGA failed to meet quorum.

This is the second time in the College's history that the SGA Senate failed to meet quorum.

The list of demands are centered around "propagating a greater sense of feeling and belonging," according to James Russo '21, secretary of Student Policy. Russo has held an SGA position for two years.

In order to even vote on these matters, Senate meetings must meet quorum. "A quorum is when we have half plus one sitting Senate members attend an SGA meeting, anything less and the only votes than can be held are those regarding adjournment," Russo said. Essentially, without the quorum, nothing can be voted on. On March 23, an emergency meeting was held to vote on the demands, and the SGA failed to meet quorum due to lack of attendance.

Last Tuesday, they met quorum. The SGA debated and voted on several significant issues. The first vote that occurred was the approval of last week's minutes, followed by a vote to approve the list of demands presented the previous week. The motions passed. Next, the Senate voted to suspend four clubs and terminate two. A club can be suspended or terminated for violating the SGA constitution, or if the club violates a federal or state law. Clubs can also be suspended or terminated if they are inactive. Suspended clubs still exist, but cannot access their funding until they prove to the Senate that they are able to meet the requirements needed for club status, according to Russo. A terminated club will no longer exist.

Last week, the clubs voted for termination and suspension were all inactive. The motion to suspend the Business Society, Psychology Club, Knitting Club and Track club passed. Water Polo and the Japanese Culture Club were terminated.

Following suspensions and terminations was the impeachment of a first-year representative. However, there was not much debate, as the member being impeached had transferred schools and never officially resigned from SGA. This forced the SGA to commence the impeachment trials.

Normally, SGA Senate meetings at St. Michael's College are filled with students in Cheray 101 debating ideas that can benefit student life. Though COVID-19 forced the SGA to hold all meetings virtually, members of the organization are still working to safely engage with the student body.

In its simplest form, the SGA is a student organization composed of elected class officers, club and area representatives, faculty and staff advisors, and an appointed executive board. Members of the SGA meet to discuss how they can improve the college experience and address student concerns. The purpose of the SGA is to be a liaison between the student body and administration. The organization also works to ensure strong feelings of belonging for every student.

Despite all the SGA has accomplished at Senate meetings, they are not as lively as they used to be. Throughout Russo's tenure, the sounds of strong debate amongst the Senate are familiar, but not as lively now that meetings are held over Zoom.

Though engagement is lower, according to Russo, the productivity of the meetings has not slowed down at all. "I'd say this has probably been one of the most productive e-boards in recent years," he said.

Russo is not the only one who noticed these changes.

Tenley Mazerolle '21, secretary of finance and veteran member of the SGA, has also noticed that discussions at Senate meetings haven't been as active as they have been in the past, but the SGA is still accomplishing what they need to.

"The Senate would ask a lot more questions and just be more involved during my first and second year," Mazerolle said. But much like Russo, she suspects that COVID has impacted the engagement of the Senate. "The end of last year and all of this year was totally different because of COVID," she said.

Russo said he is hopeful that next year will be different. He is confident that the incoming executive board will be able to transition back into in-person Senate meetings.

"I have high hopes for the SGA moving forward because we have adapted very well ... and I see nothing but better things coming once COVID rolls over," Russo said. A big change the SGA had to overcome was how to get work done remotely. They were able to persevere through this when they released the COVID student learning survey last semester, and all of the work that went into making and distributing the survey online.

The SGA has helped many people and those who have participated are able to take their experience and use it in the real world. Rob Robinson, vice president of finance, has been an SGA advisor for over 10 years, and has witnessed how the SGA can impact students and help them develop leadership and organizational skills to help them in careers after College.

He worked with Nicole Ouellette, former secretary of finance for two years, and she went on to work at the Green Mountain Higher Education Consortium after graduation. Her work there includes finding "points of collaboration," Robinson said, and that "it was great to see someone like Nicole get a first out of college job at the consortium."

Injecting hope for college students

Rapid vaccine distribution in Vermont

By Jacob Perkins
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On March 13, 2020, St. Michael's College students were sent home for Spring break, and wouldn't return due to the national outbreak of COVID-19. One year later, a vaccine for the virus that has taken over 500,000 lives is being distributed nationwide.

The time for students to get vaccinated is approaching. According to the Vermont Department of Health, the vaccine will be available to any Vermonter 16 years and older beginning on April 19.

While many students are waiting to receive their vaccine, there are a few who received theirs earlier.

Christain Vogt '23, received his vaccine due to his role within the St. Michael's College Fire Department.

"Initially...I kind of thought it [COVID-19] was something like a flu and probably not that bad, until I actually did some research," he said. Vogt learned about the preliminary results and potential fatality rates, and discovered just how serious it really was. "Then I was like, oh no, this is actually something bad," he said.

"After the first one [dose], my arm was sore for a day. After the second one, I felt like I had caught a bad flu for a day and a half," he said "The night was pretty rough and the day after that, but after that it went as quickly as it came."

Kurt Dirmaier '23 also received the vaccine, and said that he experienced mild symptoms after the second dose. "I felt pretty tired for about a day," he said.

Rosemary Marr '23 who has chronic Lyme Disease, wanted to get the vaccine to not only protect herself, but others as well. "I wanted to get the vaccine because both my mom and I have compromised immune systems, so if either of us got sick it would be really scary," she said.

Marr said she would feel awful if she was an asymptomatic carrier and transmitted it to someone else.

On March 29, Mary Masson stated, via email, that "there is no indication from the State of Vermont that colleges will hold vaccine clinics for students before May. That said, all persons 16 years of age and older can register for the vaccine as of April 19."

When asked if it will be mandatory for students to have the vaccine next fall, Mary Masson answered via email, "We're not sure yet. Stay tuned!"

At a press conference on March 30, Governor Phil Scott stated in a press conference that college students in Vermont who "maintain their out-of-state status" cannot be vaccinated.

Out-of-state college students would be considered state residents if they stay in Vermont over the summer.

Liz Winterbauer, a public health instructor at St. Michael's College, stated that "there is no public health rationale for this decision." Winterbauer further commented, "Everyone in the state is transmitting the virus, and what we need to do right now is reduce transmission."

Mary Masson, of the Bergeron Wellness Center, when asked about this statement said, "Know that we as colleges are fighting hard on this issue."

After receiving a vaccine, the Vermont Department of Health advises people to continue using face masks and practice social distancing. New strains of the virus are still emerging, and further research must be done to see how effective the vaccines are against them, according to the Vermont Department of Health.

The B117 straine or the U.K. straine, poses a 61 percent higher risk of a 28 day mortality and is more contagious than the original straine.

As of April 4, there have been 30.7 million confirmed cases and 554,000 confirmed deaths in the United States. To put in perspective, 554 thousand is 88.7 percent of the population of Vermont

Dr. Rochelle Walensky, director of the CDC, stated at a White House briefing, "I'm going to reflect on the recurring feeling I have of impending doom," due to rising cases in the U.S.

According to the CDC, the U.S had reached 60,000 COVID-19 cases a day and cases have risen quickly in the north east.

As college President Lorraine Sterritt stated at the March 25 Town Hall, though the vaccines are a "light at the end of this long tunnel... we are regrettably not out of the woods."

To register for a vaccine appointment, visit www.healthvermont.gov the Vermont Department of Health's website, click COVID-19," After, press "Vaccine" on the left sidebar, then click "Vaccine appointments."

A driver's license or any form of state-issued ID that contains name, age, state residency, and health insurance, if possible, is necessary for an appointment.

PHOTO COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

According to the Vermont Department of Health, any Vermonter over the age of 16 years old can register to get the vaccine starting April 19.

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Standing in solidarity with AAPI

Annie Serkes
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On March 16, a man went on a rampage at three different spas in Atlanta, killing eight people, six of them being of Asian descent. Although we may not know the true motive from the shooter, it is a tragic incident and a major wake up call to our nation. In response to this act of violence, President Steritt took action in an email statement of solidarity to the community. This statement showed support for the Asian, Asian American, and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community and highlighted that the campus community stands by its mission.

"These most recent acts of violence and indeed all instances of racism fly in the face of our mission of celebrating diversity and advancing a peaceful society. I ask that we all continue to engage in conversation, seek truth, reach out with empathy to those who are hurting, and take care of one another."

Stop AAPI Hate is a nonprofit social organization that tracks incidents of xenophobia and discrimination against those in the AAPI community. The organization reported that nearly 3,800 hate incidents against these communities occurred over the past year. With the recent increase in hate crimes against the community, many people living in the United States who identify as AAPI are living in fear. Saint Michael's College is actively trying to stop xenophobia, and in response to the recent violence against the AAPI community, the College community has also introduced initiatives to take action.

"Liberal arts education is intended to prepare students for global and socially conscious citizenship – education in itself should disrupt xenophobia," said Kristin McAndrew, vice president for enrollment and marketing.

"More specifically, there are a number of things happening right now. Faculty are sharing resources for class discussions, the Anti-Racism Coalition has begun a Weekly Witness for Peace and Racial Justice, and there is a table in Alliot where students can show support of our AAPI community," said McAndrew.

Another initiative that provides help to students who have experienced any issues of bias, racism, or discrimination is the SMC Bias Response Team– made up of faculty, staff and administrators. Students at St. Michael's are encouraged to report these types of issues, so appropriate measures can be taken.

"We meet together every two weeks about approaches, if there are incidents, we meet weekly," said Margaret Bass, special assistant to the President for diversity and inclusion and chair of the SMC Racial Justice Task Force. "We solve the harm that has been done and solve the problem in a more constructive and less punitive way."

"I know many Asians are feeling unsafe around the country, but I don't feel like this in Vermont," said Ethan Li, '22 who is currently an international student from Wuhan, China. "It is a safe place, especially here at school. "I think St. Michael's is very caring of their students, and in the recent shooting situation the president's email outreach really added some comfort for our community at school."

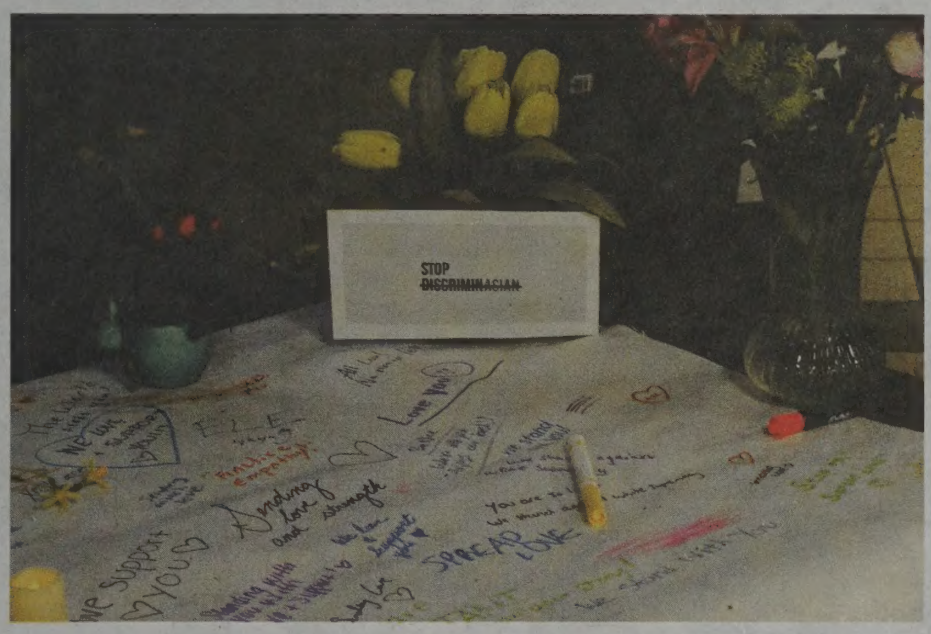

PHOTO BY JOHNATHON MARCOTTE

A table in Alliot displays notes of solidarity with the AAPI community.

TheDiversity Coalition is a resource on campus that hosts activities and events that help educate students about an array of issues such as race, ethnicity, culture, gender, and more. They are also engaging to raise more awareness around Asian discrimination, and educate people in the community.

"We are planning to host a vigil with lanterns at night, this will honor and show respect to the victims of the Atlanta shooting," said Momoka Okamura, secretary of Diversity Coalition. "We are also trying to brainstorm events for the future, to help educate and bring awareness to racism on campus and our everyday lives."

These initiatives can help raise awareness on campus and help those who are feeling targeted. Along with these resources, professors and faculty play a major role in keeping students educated about racism, and on the violence against the AAPI community. They can also provide comfort and understanding to those who feel uneasy about this.

As for Li, he said he has felt support at the College. "I've been at St. Mike's for three years, and I've really come to see how great the student community acts and treats others," he said.. They are so welcoming and kind to everyone. It's amazing that they stand by St. Mike's core values of diversity and kindness. I don't think there is a better community than that." Li said.

Anti-racism groups active on campus

Hannah Bishop
Staff Writer
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With the recent increase in anti-racism movements and calls for racial justice locally, national and internationally, faculty and staff at St. Michael's College have created new initiatives on campus. Two of the main groups rising to the occasion include the Racial Justice Task Force (RJTF) and the Anti-Racism Coalition (ARC).

"The creation of the RJTF was my idea," said Margaret Bass, special assistant to the president for diversity and inclusion, and chair of the Racial Justice Task Force. "When I presented the proposal to the administration, I received complete support," Bass explained.

"All members of the RJTF hold in common commitments to social justice and to a definition of diversity and inclusion that includes all marginalized and underrepresented populations in our nation and on our campus," Bass said.

Bass wanted people to recognize that although we must remain vigilant with regard to diversity and inclusion, racial diversity and racial justice are two of the most apparent and urgent needs of our campus community.

"We work toward a campus community that welcomes BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) and that fosters kindness and care for others. We also make it clear that each person has the responsibility to work toward the eradication of racial intolerance and injustice," she explained.

Already, the group has stepped up to create change in our campus community. From the creation of several reading groups focused on anti-racism, to an affinity group for BIPOC faculty and staff, to working with departments and Human Resources toward recruiting BIPOC faculty, the Racial Justice Task Force has made an imprint on campus, and have even recruited three African American adjunct faculty members.

"Our greatest achievement, however, is the Edmundite Graduate Fellowship for African-American Scholars."

The Edmundite Graduate Fellows Program for African American Scholars is a program that welcomes scholars in the final stages of their doctoral work to the SMC community to jumpstart their careers. Scholars are further provided a stipend of $20,000, housing, health benefits, and up to $3,000 toward relocation expenses.

This program understands that a diverse faculty enriches the learning environment as a whole by bringing underrepresented voices and perspectives into our community. "Indeed, it is the obligation of a quality liberal arts institution to include those perspectives and voices as part of the educational experience," the program outline states.

"There's so much work to do with regard to recruitment and retention of faculty and staff. We're making some progress, but we need faculty departments, in particular, to support this work. I hope that SMC won't need an RJTF in five years," she said.

The Anti-Racism Coalition (ARC), is an emerging collective of St. Michael's faculty and staff, who share an interest in recognizing, uprooting and dismantling racism on our campus.

Goals of the Anti-Racism Coalition aim to not only listen to BIPOC colleagues and students, but to amplify BIPOC voices, and decenter whiteness. This group hopes to learn

SEE **ANTI-RACISM**, PAGE 10

Easter Weekend

Holiday away from COVID

Photos By Lucas Persechino
Social Media Editor
lpersechino@mail.smcvt.edu

Top Left: Kind message revealed inside an Easter egg before exchanged for candy as a part of the egg hunt on Sunday. Sponsored by SGA.
Top Right: Ryan Donaruma '24 throws a football to a friend in front of Durick Library during the Spring Fair on Saturday.
Left Chicken pita from Ahli-Baba's food truck during Spring Fair on Saturday. Sponsored by SGA.
Right: (left to right) Kelly Laggis '23, Danielle Scaperrotta '23, and Nicole Ladas '23 share a piz-za during the Spring Fair on Saturday.

Left: A cook from "The Wheel House" grills hot dogs during the Spring Fair on Saturday.
Top: Maggie Burnham '23 poses next to Cecilia Schmelzle '23 holding a golden egg and prize during the Easter Egg Hunt on Sunday. Schmelzle's prize included a $50 Visa gift card. Sponsored by SGA.
Middle: Anna Witkowski '22 waits to hand out prizes for Easter Egg Hunt on Sunday.
Bottom: Kevin Riggs '24 plays late evening golf on Easter Sunday.

No fans in the stands

PHOTO BY JAMES BUCK COURTESY OF SMC ATHLETICS

Fernando Barriga '22 celebrating a play at a home game against Stonehill Wed, March 31.

Jackson Stoever
Videography Editor
jstoever@mail.smcvt.edu

Spring sports have started, and athletes are finally taking to the fields after their extended time away. In wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, students were unsure whether spring sports would get a season this semester. An answer came on March 10 when the college received reassuring news from President Lorraine Sterritt regarding the future of spring sports.

"With carefully developed health and safety protocols, reviewed and approved by the NE10, we are able to have spring sports" she wrote in a school-wide email.

On the same day, the St. Michael's athetics department released a statement with the league's decision regarding fan support on campus and provided futher information.

"At this time, no outside spectators will be permitted at Northeast 10 Conference contests" the statement said. "This includes family and parents of student-athletes for home and visiting teams, as well as Saint Michael's College students and community members."

Without the cheer and excitement riveting from the stands, athletes are looking to their own to fill the missing gap that fans have left behind. Kyle Hirshom '22, captain of the men's lacrosse team, understands the COVID-19 precautions and put a positive spin on the missing fanbase.

"After losing last season, we are thrilled just to have the opportunity to compete," he said. "During games, our bench has done a great job bringing a ton of energy and boosting morale."

According to Hirshom, like St. Michael's, the schools that his team have played have had similar COVID-19 precautions in place that restrict fan support.

Despite the restrictions in place, athletes understand the safety concerns and teams have managed to hold each other accountable. Dante Moran '21 reflected on the baseball team and how he has helped keep safety precautions in check.

"We have yet to have a true away series this season," he said. "I think the biggest thing is to make sure everyone holds each other accountable to make sure we aren't putting ourselves or others at risk while traveling."

According to Moran, some opposing teams and their respective colleges allow spectators. He argues that this could have its benefits.

"I know that other schools (in the NE10) are allowing fans. I do think that this could be handled properly and could have a positive impact on the spring sport athletes" he said.

In addition, there is some confusion as to why these rules are so strict.

Angelica Johns '24 admits that there is some confusion among the athletes on the reasoning behind some of these strict guidelines.

"I believe that if we put in place the proper guidelines and rules surrounding this issue, such as masks required, proper social distancing, standing with your households only, and so on, then we could make this (fan support) work," she said. "I don't fully understand how this differs from outdoor gatherings that have been taking place."

To clear up confusion, Steve Lewis, director of strategic communications and operations at the NE10 provided some information regarding decisions and if they were made by the league or the college.

"Everything (regarding off-campus visitors) was agreed upon by the league," he said. As for the College's decision to restrict St. Michael's students, "It would depend on local guidance from their community and the state of Vermont. They have their own autonomy to decide."

There has been no further communication on whether or not these restrictions will be lifted if cases on campus stay containable. The NE10 is constantly working on lifting guidelines before the spring season comes to a close.

"This is the most central topic we have currently and we meet on a weekly-basis to discuss" Lewis said.

Until that time comes, fans can watch spring games by tuning in to NE10 coverage.

https://portal.stretchinternet.com/saintmichaels/

Anti-racism groups continued

to recognize individual and institutional racism while pursuing mindfulness and personal awareness as they stand up and speak out against racism. By working to foster partnerships with other campus groups including but not limited to The Racial Justice Task Force, Center for Multicultural Affairs & Services, and Diversity Coalition, ARC hopes to decolonize St. Michael's by addressing the existing institutional and structural racism present on campus.

"We have a lot of faculty and staff on campus who are interested in educating ourselves and taking action to support our BIPOC community members, as well as unearthing the ways that racism lives in us as individuals and in the institutions of SMC," said Kathy Butts, ARC member and director of counseling at Bergeron Wellness Center.

In looking to the future and reflecting on the past, Butts said she is eager to see what faculty and staff can do to decolonize themselves at the College. "There have been many efforts among us in the past, but we have had only very small successes, as we know from hearing about the lived experiences of our BIPOC community members," she said.

Recently, the group has welcomed 70 new members. Butts is encouraged by the large numbers of faculty and staff who want to get involved, and it makes her hopeful. "The time is ripe now for more substantive change," Butts said. Butts also noted, however, that this work is going to take a lot of effort from all areas of the college to bring about this change.

According to Trish Siplon, professor of political science and director of public health, "Racism is adaptive, complex and pervasive; that means that anti-racism efforts need to be as well. It is important to have formal structures that are explicitly anti-racist, but it is equally important for all of us to think about all the ways in our everyday lives we need to change and grow," she said.

Siplon further articulated the role of ARC as a vehicle used to support the individual and collective efforts on our campus in addressing racism at the individual and institutional level.

Similarly to Butts, Siplon shared her feelings of hope for ARC. "The April Calendar of ARC events is a nice example of some of the work that has already been initiated by participants. I am excited that so many people have already gotten involved."

The Racial Justice Task Force will welcome its first two Edmundite Graduate Fellowship Scholars in the 2021-2022 academic year.
The Anti-Racism Coalition will be sponsoring a Weekly Witness for Peace and Racial Justice every Monday in April, and has two meetings left for the remainder of the semester, on April 7 at 3:30 pm and on April 21 at 3:30 pm.

An empty JUUL pod

A student's journey through nicotine withdrawl

Brendan Looney posing for a portrait in his room in Aubin Hall on Sunday, April 4.

PHOTO BY WILL GEORGE

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Brendan Looney '23 laid in bed and stared at the ceiling, wondering why he couldn't get up. For an entire week, he experienced nausea, fatigue and shortness of breath. He had never been this sick before.

The cause was a vape, a small piece of plastic with a battery and a nicotine extract and it would make him reexamine his entire way of life.

"I knew exactly what the issue was," Looney said. "I was vaping these manmade and unnatural chemicals which were affecting my immune system."

The start of Looney's nicotine dependence dates back to high school. Looney didn't want to vape, but his friends persuaded him to try it. At first, he vaped once every few hours. At the time of his highest consumption, this number grew to 30 times a day– or twice an hour.

"I would get an itch in the middle of class, and I would just have to go to the bathroom, take my JUUL out, rip it," Looney said. "It was easy, simple, and felt good."

The e-cigarette, more commonly known as a vape, was invented in 2003 to wean tobacco smokers off traditional tobacco cigarettes. However, many vapes have a higher concentration of nicotine than a tobacco cigarette.

"High concentration nicotine vape acts as a conduit for a younger generation of folks to switch over to smoking cigarettes," said Ari Kirshenbaum, professor of psychology and psychopharmacology. "There are concerns that vaping is renormalizing smoking and nicotine use once again," he said.

Vapes are specifically dangerous to adolescents from ages 12-17. In this period of development, nicotine can cause lasting neurobiological changes, and increase susceptibility to having a substance dependence later in life, Kirshenbaum said.

Looney became nicotine dependent at sixteen years old. He started vaping with a JUUL, a vape popular with young adults because of its small size, fruity taste and discreet smell. The JUUL was created in 2015 and was an instant success.

The Truth Initiative, a nonprofit organization dedicated to nicotine prevention, found that in 2018, JUULs made up 75 percent of all e-cigarette sales. Adolescents from age 15 -17 are 16 times more likely to have tried a JUUL than a user ages 25-34, said the Truth Initiative. A single JUUL pod has 40 milligrams of nicotine, which is the equivalent to 20 tobacco cigarettes, says UnhypedVT, an organization working to prevent vaping in teens.

Nicotine consumption impacts several neurotransmitters, including dopamine, a neurotransmitter that sends pleasure messages between neurons, and acetylcholine and serotonin, two chemicals responsible for memory.

Many students claim that nicotine products help them focus and improve academic performance, but Kirshenbaum says otherwise.

"No, [nicotine] is not going to improve your grades," Kirshenbaum said. "It's just going to make it more likely that you're just going to get your work done faster, so that then you can drink and party more."

According to Kirshenbaum, vape users are more likely to be diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorders, better known as ADHD, because they are trying to lessen their concentration deficit. Instead of turning to a nicotine product, Kirshenbaum urges people who believe they have a concentration problem to visit a doctor and see if they're eligible for a stimulant prescription.

Although vapes were originally thought to be safer than tobacco cigarettes, vapes often have a higher concentration of nicotine than their tobacco counterparts, Kirshenbaum said. The highest legal dose of nicotine in a vape is 18 milligrams per milliliter. Compared to a tobacco cigarette, a user could consume more nicotine in a single puff of vape than in a single puff of a cigarette. In fact, the JUUL patent says "nicotine salt formulation provides satisfaction comparable to smoking a traditional cigarette."

For many nicotine users, stopping their dependency on the substance is the biggest obstacle they'll face. In fact, 75 percent of smokers who try to quit cannot, said Kirshenbaum.

SEE **NICOTINE**, PAGE 14

DEFENDER ARTS & CULTURE

APRIL 8 2021

The Glosherberg Files

(Scene 3)

By Glosherberg Associates
Contributing
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INT. Car - Night

[Glosherberg is in his car talking to the body bag (which is now wearing a cowboy hat)]

Glosherberg: Jeez, that Oprah gal was real aggressive! Reminds me of that time when I was teaching a class at Miami University of Ohio at Oxford of Miami, Florida College…

-Flashback-

[Glosherberg is in a lecture hall style classroom (about the size of Cheray 101) with white walls, bus-seat style carpets, It has a big whiteboard behind him that he does not use. However, it does have random and outlandish stock footage playing for some reason (Guy opening his fridge and taking an almost empty carton of milk, a crazy scene from an infomercial where a vacuum cord wraps around a guy and he falls into his TV and somehow causes a flood fire,a visual of Steve Harvey, Charlie Brown missing the field goal kick, Japanese Soda commercial, etc.) The first shot is a picture of the attendance sheet where all the names are blacked out but one. The name Timothy is not blacked out, and the rest of the names have Timothy written in by pen right next to them.

GLOSHERBERG (In classic suit and possibly English hat [It's the type of hat that some people think they can pull off but nobody can. However, Glosherberg rocks it, it's fitting of his confusing and poor fashion sense]. He speaks to class with utmost confidence and certainty.)
Hello class and welcome to Belgian interpretive dance in the inter-war period and I'm happy to have you for our first lesson: Pretzel Making.

STUDENT #1
Excuse me Professor, umm between what wars does this class focus on?

GLOSHERBERG
Excellent question Timothy.

STUDENT #1
Actually sir my name is-
[student is interrupted by Glosherberg]

GLOSHERBERG
Shut up. If I wanted to hear some Bozo tell me their life story, I'd go to my family dinner. Anyway, as I was saying. Before I was so rudely interrupted by that ungrateful hack. This class takes place between any two wars that you want. WWI, Storage Wars, Family Feud, the War that I had with my fourth wife, twice divorced.

STUDENT #2
Professor, how many times have you been married?

GLOSHERBERG
First of all that is none of your business Timothy and second of all, 11. But that depends on who you ask, if you ask the unrecognized state of East Virginia, it's 13 times. If you ask Keith David who played Elroy in the series Community, he would say get out of my Kitchen.

Student #3
(Very Excited)
I love that show!

GLOSHERBERG
I want you to leave like I left my 5th wife, with no money, whimpering, and bitter. (The student leaves, visibly shaken while throwing loose change on the floor)

GLOSHERBERG
Now do any of you know anything about the lovely South American, tropical paradise that is Belgium? Famous for its coffee beans and the vibrant city of Rio de Janeiro. I remember travelling there during my college days, but the government says I'm not allowed to ever go back.

STUDENT #1
Well, I know that French Fries are actually Belgian.

GLOSHERBERG
You buffoon, you absolute fool. You are the most gullible idiot I have ever witnessed. Why would they be called French Fries if they weren't made in France? Who's the professor of Belgian interpretive dance here? You don't think I know my French Fries? (Student raises their hand) Yes, Timothy.

Student #4
Hey my name is actually Timothy

GLOSHERBERG
(Eyes narrow, Glosherberg gets that sort of look in a movie where a character is about to get shot and another character knows what's about to happen)
I made a vow to my father that I would never teach a Timothy. If you're not lying son, you better start running.

GLOSHERBERG Cont.
Now, let me show you why this lesson is called 'Pretzel Making'
[Glosherberg goes to the computer to play a video on the screen. Initially, it starts the Dean Scream video but it doesn't get to the actual Dean Scream. He then clicks on another video to play. It is the Flashdance scene, but Glosherberg is in the chair. At first, you only see the salt begin to fall. Then dozens of pretzels fall down onto him as he stretches out his arms. He catches a pretzel in his mouth.

-End Flashback-

GLOSHERBERG
Wow, those college kids were so rude (Turns to body bag) You're not too bad though

Wow wow wow! That sure was a great installment of *The Glosherberg Files* wasn't it!? HA HA HA HA HA HA! Yea! We got a real good look into Glosherberg's past at Miami University of Ohio at Oxford of Miami. Now that we took a good look into his past I can't wait to see whats in hold for us in the future! However.....perhaps the future is somthing to fear... To read past scenes of the *Glosherberg Files*, visit defender.smcvt.edu!!!! Thank you!

St. Michael's theatre presents 'Silent Sky'

Spring play allows for in-person seating for the first time in a year

PHOTO BY FINN MCGILLIVRAY

PHOTOS BY ANDY DUBACK

Above are the actors from the play "Silent Sky." The actors featured in the photographs are Mckenzie Rowbotham '24, Corban Ridlon '22, Artur Resch '24, Aimee Turcote '23, and Ava Magoon '22.

Finn McGillivray
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On Thursday, March 25 the Department of Fine Arts debuted their production of "Silent Sky". The play, written by Lauren Gunderson, is based on the true story of Henrietta Leavitt, an American astronomer whose work at the Harvard Observatory in the early 1900s contributed to significant scientific breakthroughs in her field. Though she did not always receive credit due to the male-dominated nature of the scientific community at that time, it was in large part her discoveries that allowed us to understand the size of our universe.

In addition, to live streaming the event, a format that has become the norm for all live performances during the past year, the show was also open for in-person viewing to a limited number of members within the St. Michael's community. Despite the masked actors and socially distanced audience, the show provided a refreshing taste of pre-pandemic normalcy for those in attendance.

"It's really good I think for the students who are involved in the show to be able to have the feedback of a live audience," said the show's director John Devlin, professor of Fine Arts. He detailed some of the logistical challenges they overcame, including having to hold auditions online, as well as one of the actors being quarantined just weeks before the show's opening."It set us back a little bit but we took it in stride, and we were able to keep working forward," he said. "We made lemonade."

Benoit Fumeoux '22, who was surprised by the precision of the acting on stage, described his impression of the performance. "I found it was cool that we could go in person because following theatre online is not exactly the same." With regard to the KN95 masks dawned by the cast, he was surprised that they didn't take away from the experience. "I noticed at the beginning because I was thinking it would be hard to speak with a mask, but I understood everything," Fumeoux said. "Normally you show your emotion through the face, but they showed the emotion differently, through their body language. It took nothing away from the play."

The play's lead Mckenzie Rowbotham '24 described the novelty of the experience from her perspective as a performer. "Normally I'm never nervous before opening night, but I think the fact that I hadn't performed live on stage in over a year contributed to that initial nervousness," she said. She detailed the hurdles that masking and socially distancing created for the performers. "I think because we practiced with the masks, they just sort of became a part of the costume for me, and thus a part of my character," Rowbotham said. "There were so many times when I felt like there should be some sort of hug in a scene, and other actors felt it too, but we had to abstain in order to stay healthy."

For students interested in attending an upcoming show in person, there will be two student-directed projects opening in McCarthey in the coming weeks. Limited in-person seating will be available if possible depending on COVID levels.

Journey through nicotine continued

"On a scale of one to ten, [the difficulty of quitting] was a 15," Looney said.

Kirshenbaum suggests that users who are serious about quitting should talk to a doctor and receive the help of a medical professional. He also notes that data has pointed to nicotine replacement therapy, like nicotine gum and patches, being a good way to quit.

Like other nicotine dependents, Looney's road to quitting hasn't been easy or straightforward. He put down the pen for over a year, but in the throws of college, picked up the pen once more. He decided to leave vaping behind him last year after catching the flu, and experiencing severe symptoms. However, Looney couldn't give the habit up immediately.

"I still had cravings for [a vape] after I got all healthy," Looney said. "I was still using, but I kept telling myself, "you were almost dying last week, and you're out here doing the same thing now." I know that if I want to be here later, I have to take care of myself now."

Currently, Looney does whatever he can to stop himself from picking up a vape. He distracts himself by hanging out with friends, playing video games, or doing homework. He recently picked up photography, which allows him to explore campus and appreciate the outdoors. He also enjoys playing with his dogs.

"Animals bring me a satisfaction that vaping can't," Looney said.

A critical part of quitting is having a team of people who support the journey to sobriety, which can include doctors, psychotherapists, family, friends, and significant others, said Kirshenbaum. Many users turn to support groups when trying to quit. The Bergeron Wellness Center. However, there currently isn't a support group at St. Michael's College for substance abuse of any kind, whether it be nicotine, alcohol, marijuana, or other drugs.

"If this school offered a support group, I would have gone," Looney said. "About 60% of my friends here vape, and most of them [are fine], but there's another few of them that are like, 'well, I don't really want to keep doing this, but I have nowhere to go.'" he said.

DEFENDER EDITORIAL

APRIL 8 2021

Corrections from last issue: "Dream Team" was written by staff writer Hannah Bishop, and "NE-10 Sports Update" was written by staff writer Rob Cattanach.

Mission Statement: We, the voice of St. Michael's College, strive to create high quality journalism collected on a foundation of integrity. We represent the pulse of our campus by facilitating a forum for informative, enlightening and thought-provoking conversation. Through in-depth reporting, accurate storytelling and exceptional visuals, The Defender aims to professionally and ethically deliver the truth to our diverse audience.

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BACON CHEESEBURGER PARADISE
Honey Barbecue Sauce, Cheddar/Mozzarella Cheese, Red Onions, Extra Ground Beef, Bacon, Gorgonzola Cheese
BASIL PESTO CHICKEN
Basil Pesto Nut Sauce, Cheddar/Mozzarella Cheese, Chicken, Roasted Red Peppers, Sun Dried Tomatoes, Red Onions, Gorgonzola Cheese
BARELY BELIEVABLE
Honey Barbecue Sauce, Cheddar/Mozzarella Cheese, Green Peppers, Red Onions, Tomatoes, Beyond Burger®, Gorgonzola Cheese
CLASSIC PEPPERONI DELUXE
Tomato Sauce, Cheddar/Mozzarella Cheese, Pepperoni, Ham, Red Onions, Green Peppers, Mushrooms
EXOTIC GREEK ISLAND
Tomato Sauce, Cheddar/Mozzarella Cheese, Garlic, Red Onions, Spinach, Tomatoes, Black Olives, Feta Cheese
FENNEL SAUSAGE GOURMET
Olive Oil Garlic, Cheddar/Mozzarella Cheese, Hot Sausage, Fennel, Red Onions, Spinach, Gorgonzola Cheese
GOAT CHEESE HONEY PIE
Olive Oil Garlic, Cheddar/Mozzarella Cheese, Mushrooms, Red Onions, Thyme, Goat Cheese, Honey
GORGONZOLA GOURMET
Olive Oil Garlic, Cheddar/Mozzarella Cheese, Spinach, Tomatoes, Artichokes, Gorgonzola Cheese
HAWAIIAN ISLAND DELIGHT
Tomato Sauce, Cheddar/Mozzarella Cheese, Ham, Bacon, Broccoli, Pineapple
HOT HONEY BLISS
Tomato Sauce, Cheddar/Mozzarella Cheese, Pepperoni, Red Onions, Oregano, Jalapenos, Hot Honey
MEAT LOVER'S REVENGE
Tomato Sauce, Cheddar/Mozzarella Cheese, Pepperoni, Hot Sausage, Ground Beef, Ham
ROASTED CHICKEN BBQ
Barbecue Sauce, Cheddar/Mozzarella Cheese, Chicken, Red Onions, Mushrooms, Roasted Red Peppers, Mesquite Spices
ROASTED MAINE POTATO
Olive Oil Garlic, Cheddar/Mozzarella Cheese, Spinach, Red Onions, Shredded Potatoes, Bacon, Rosemary, Feta Cheese
SIX FEET UNDER
Tomato Sauce, Cheddar/Mozzarella Cheese, Garlic, Pepperoni, Red Onions, Bacon, Hot Sausage
SMOKIN' GOUDA
Tomato Sauce, Cheddar/Mozzarella Cheese, Garlic, Basil, Red Onions, Pepperdew® Peppers, Smoked Gouda Cheese
TEXAS HOT BUFFALO CHICKEN
Tomato Sauce, Cheddar/Mozzarella Cheese, Spicy Chicken Breast, Red Onions, Gorgonzola Cheese
THAI CHICKEN
Thai Peanut Sauce, Cheddar/Mozzarella Cheese, Chicken, Mushrooms, Red Onions, Green Peppers, Broccoli
VEGAN SALVATION
Olive Oil Garlic, Vegan Cheese, Spinach, Red Onions, Mushrooms, Tomatoes, Black Olives
VEGETARIAN WORKS
Tomato Sauce, Cheddar/Mozzarella Cheese, Spinach, Broccoli, Mushrooms, Green Peppers, Red Onions, Tomatoes, Black Olives
WORKS
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DEFENDER VOICES

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A COVID-themed 21st birthday

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In our culture, turning 21 is a huge milestone and is considered an achievement for all adults. With the impending superpower of adulthood within my grasp, I will be able to (legally) fuel myself with alcohol and if questioned, whip out my junior operator's license with a 17-year-old me on the front to prove that I am in fact, a big kid now.

With the COVID-19 restrictions in place on campus, I had prepared myself weeks before my birthday that it may not live up to the "hype" that a 21st birthday would normally have. I anticipated that my birthday would blend with every other day that has passed amidst the pandemic. I knew that I would be turning 21, but would it truly feel like I was? Don't I need a massive celebration to accommodate for such a milestone?

Nevertheless, there I was on Thursday March 25 at 11:30 p.m. too excited to fall asleep. I had the same butterflies in my stomach that I have every year. You would think that after 20 birthdays I would be over it by now, but there is nothing like anticipation of turning a year older to get you all antsy. I laid awake, watching the time go by on my phone. In 30 minutes, I would be the first to congratulate myself on turning the infamous 21.

I did not make it to midnight.

I woke up the next day. March 26. My 21st birthday. The first few birthday texts had rolled in. Since God was holding onto my social media profiles for safe keeping during Lent, I had to leave the rest of the birthday wishes up to my imagination.

With my birthday residing during spring break each year, I was not accustomed to waking up early and grogily stumbling to my classes. Alas, just as I had survived 20 years of being me, I survived my weekly two-and-a-half-hour lecture on the bubonic plague.

Now that all that was out of the way, it was time for a birthday dinner of champions. Together, with a (small) party of seven, I made my way to my favorite restaurant, Texas Roadhouse. After patiently waiting in a very cramped car for our party to be called in, we were seated and given time to look over the menu. Within minutes, the waiter returned and asked for our selection of drinks.

PHOTO BY JACKSON STOEVER

My girlfriend, Regina, and I enjoy a breezy day by the waterfront in Burlington on Saturday, March 27.

PHOTO BY JACKSON STOEVER

My friends and I met up for dinner at Texas Roadhouse in Williston on Friday, March 26.

This was the big moment. So many options were at my fingertips as I glanced through the menu at the brightly colored beverages. Without much thought, I settled for a "Kenny's Cooler," the most vibrant of the selection.

Part of me wants to say that I chose it for the contents, but the deciding factor was that it was blue.

When asked for a form of identification by the waiter, I proudly handed over my debit card. After a proper teasing from my table, I vocally proclaimed that I would get used to this process eventually.

Dinner was great. I felt the most "normal" since arriving on campus this year. At the end of the meal, in classic Texas Roadhouse fashion, the staff brought out a saddle, customary for all birthday celebrations. The concept of this saddle is simple. The birthday girl or boy hops up on the imaginary horse while the staff announces your birthday to the entire restaurant. From there, they proceed to make a big deal about the occasion as if it were your 21st birthday or something. The saddle was unusually comfortable.

With COVID precautions in effect, the party slowly dwindled in numbers after dinner and I eventually found myself back in my room at a reasonable hour.

Admittingly, there was not a bad thing to be said about the night that ensued. I had expected a lackluster birthday; one that was to be celebrated virtually or even by myself. Though the safety of myself and my friends was always a concern, I did not find myself worrying about such problems the entire night.

The party did not end there.

The next day, my parents and girlfriend met up with me for the second installment of my birthday celebration. Upon arrival, I was gifted with their presence, and a carload of gifts and a fair share of snacks for those long nights. It felt good to follow through on a request from my mom that she had asked of me the night before.

"Don't be hungover," she texted.

It did not take long until the celebrating continued with a family lunch at Ken's Pizzeria on Church Street in Burlington. Afterwards, we walked the crowded streets of Burlington, window-shopping for the sake of spending more time together. I was surprised to see the amount of people in the streets that day. It was as if the world suddenly opened back up after its extended time away.

When it finally came time for them to head home, I realized that my 21st birthday had finally come to a close. Though prolonged over two days, it felt more like one long day to me.

Despite the circumstances, it was the best birthday ever. This was the big one. The one to remember. There was no need for a massive party for that day to be remembered. There was no reason to black out after a long townhouse excursion. Not only was there no reason, but I simply did not find it necessary. With all the hype that this milestone brings with it, I felt as though I owed it to everyone who has ever been in my shoes to celebrate harder than I had ever before.

The day came and went in a heartbeat and I was satisfied. I feel as though having such a landmark of a birthday amidst a global pandemic made me aware of what truly matters.

Spectral shenanigans

By Connor Torpey
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Hello intrepid readers of the St. Michaels Defender, today I have for you an extraordinary story, one that can only be told in the context of video. You see, I have been tasked with proving the existence of a ghost in Canterbury to my roommates. For some reason they believe me to be causing disturbances in the suite, disturbances mind you that can only be caused by extraplanar beings (i.e. missing leftovers in the fridge, dropping someone's toothbrush in the toilet, breaking a chair and repairing it with scotch tape). If these accusations against me are not proven to be false, my suitemates are prepared to have me evicted from the suite.

Thankfully, I have recently declared my major as Media Studies, Journalism, and Digital Arts, with an emphasis in journalism. Because of journalistic integrity I can no longer tell a lie, and only believe in the truth. Truth is all that exists in my mind now, all and any nonfactual statements and ideas have been flushed out of my mind and have been replaced with only hunger for a clearer view on reality. Why are puppies cute? Why is the sky blue? Is the earth really round? If dinosaurs existed how come I've never seen one? Who or what is haunting Canterbury hall? These are the questions that I must and will answer, and if I can't I'll find myself looking for new housing.

Check out the video on 4/12/20 at: defender.smcvt.edu

The call for mutual respect

By Mikey Halligan
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A couple of weekends ago on a Saturday night, I was hanging out with some friends at their townhouse along with two or three other people that lived elsewhere. I hadn't been there for long and I was planning on leaving when a group of three Public Safety officers knocked on both the front and back door, came inside, and had us cornered in the common room.

My friends and I answered all of their questions respectfully and didn't want to give them a hard time. They asked for our KnightCards. While the officer was taking photos of our KnightCards, we were still getting interrogated by the other two officers, with questions like: "Who said Pub Safe was coming;" and "Who was looking through the window?" We had no idea what they were talking about. I had never been interrogated by Public Safety like this before. I thought the only reason why students would be annoyed and frustrated at Public Safety was because students wanted to have fun and Public Safety was just shutting it down, but I quickly learned there was more to it than that.

After I got my KnightCard back, the officer asked who doesn't live here. Three other students and I raised our hands. The officer moved closer to us, looked at us with a power-hungry stare in his eyes and told us to "get the f*** out!" That's when I realized it's more than just parties getting shut down, it's the lack of respect that Public Safety has towards the students, and that's why the students have this lack of respect towards Public Safety.

For the most part, Public Safety and students have been butting heads since I was a freshman, and I'm sure there has been conflict long before my time at St. Mchael's as well. But this semester is like no other.The pandemic has brought challenges that the students, Public Safety and the school as a whole have never had to deal with until this year, and it's taking a toll on everyone.

I understand that I was in the wrong for being at my friend's townhouse, but if Public Safety handled the situation with a more understanding and sympathetic tone, then the situation didn't have to play out as it did. The officers made it seem like a good idea to surround and interrogate us, made me feel like I was a prisoner at my own school.

With tension building up recently around the high number of weekly student COVID violations, and the students getting frustrated over strict and sometimes unclear school rules, patience and overall respect between both parties has recently declined. It is not all Public Safety's fault, however. Students have to understand that Public Safety is just doing their jobs. There have been a lot of COVID violations so far this semester, some weeks averaging 30 to 40 violations.

I understand why Public Safety and the school is frustrated at the student body. It is important to keep in mind, though, that we aren't breaking these rules just to break rules. We are doing it because we are struggling. We are struggling mentally and emotionally during a global pandemic that has surpassed a year, and we are being told to not see friends and socialize in ways that support our positive mental health.

Public Safety and the school have said in many different ways that they sympathize with us, understand how we feel, and want us to be on campus. But it is hard to believe when we continue the same overwhelming routine every week.

Something needs to change. There needs to be a more equal level of patience, respect and understanding towards both parties if we want to salvage some kind of positive college experience. If Public Safety shows a little more understanding towards the students, then tension doesn't need to rise and respect doesn't have to fall. I'd like to think of Public Safety officers as allies I can turn to, but I need them to respect me and my fellow students and understand what we are going through before I can start thinking that way again.

ILLUSTRATION BY MIKEY HALLIGAN